



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



AMERICAN LEGION POST 20 RECEIVES ANOTHER TRANSPORTATION GRANT

SDDVA has just received word that American Legion Post 20 in Fort Pierre was successful in obtaining yet another VA Highly Rural Transportation Grant. This brings the total number of counties serviced by these grants to 36.

Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) are a grant-based program that helps veterans in highly rural areas travel to VA or VA-authorized health care facilities. This program provides grant funding to Veteran Service Organizations and State Veterans Service Agencies to provide transportation services in eligible counties.

American Legion Post 20, located in Fort Pierre, has received numerous grants. They in turn have contracted with River Cities Public Transit and Prairie Hills Transit to provide the service.

Counties that are eligible and being served by the American Legion Post #20 grant program include: Aurora, Bennett, Buffalo, Butte, Campbell, Clark, Corson, Custer, Day, Dewey, Edmunds, Fall River, Faulk, Gregory, Haakon, Hand, Harding, Hyde, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Kingsbury, Lyman, Marshall, McPherson, Mellette, Miner, Pennington, Perkins, Potter, Sanborn, Spink, Stanley, Sully, Tripp, and Ziebach.

For veterans living in these counties they just need to call RCPT at (605) 945.2360 to schedule a ride. The call needs to be at least two days in advance, it can be up to two weeks or more before the scheduled appointment.



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VA LAUNCHES COMMUNITY-FOCUSED PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL TO PREVENT VETERAN SUICIDE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP) and VA Midwest Health Care Network (Veterans Integrated Service Network [VISN] 23) has been working with academic researchers from the University of Pittsburgh's Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) to spearhead a community-based program as one of many efforts aimed at lowering the rate of veteran suicide.

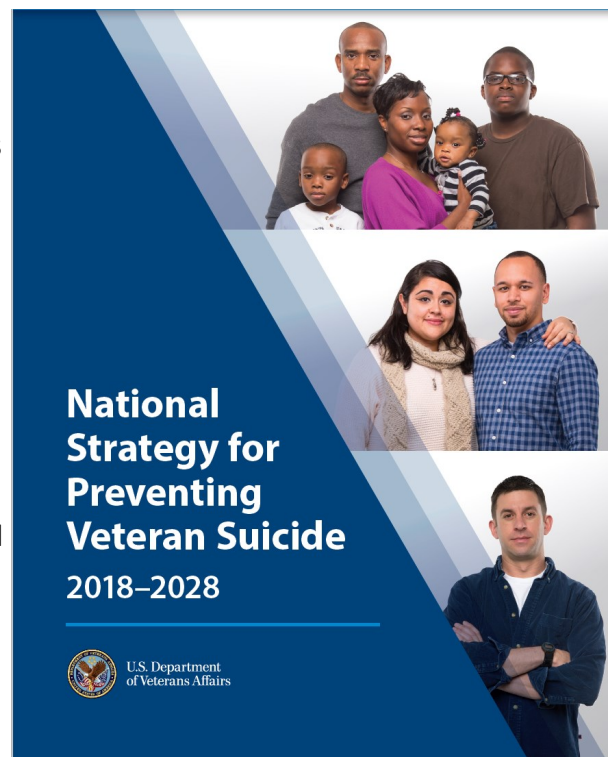
Aligned with the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#), the program, which began in early 2019, is designed to increase community involvement within VISN 23 by leveraging the reach and impact of local stakeholders.

"We recognize that just as suicide has no single determining cause, no single agency can prevent veteran suicide," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "In working with our partners on this pilot program, we are adding new opportunities to provide our veterans with whole-health solutions before they reach a point of crisis."

Charged with carrying out the program's multiple objectives, VISN 23 has deployed 10 education and outreach specialists, who have received formal training from VA leadership and PERU on how to:

- Assess community readiness for increased engagement efforts.
- Build local coalitions to facilitate wider and more frequent touchpoints with Veterans.
- Use community-specific public health data to tailor interventions to population needs.
- Provide metrics on program effectiveness to inform national implementation strategy.

Learn more about VA's suicide prevention resources and programs at: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention. Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can call Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.



SRST VETERANS AFFAIRS RECEIVED NEW VEHICLE TO TRANSPORT VETERANS

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Veterans Affairs (SRSTDVA) just received a 2019 Chevrolet Suburban from the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA).

This vehicle is made possible through a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Highly Rural Transportation. SRSTDVA will use the vehicle to transport veterans to their medical appointments.



Pictured (L to R): Tom Pheasant, driver, (Vietnam Veteran), David Harrison, transportation manager, (Iraq Veteran), and Linus Gray Eagle, driver, (Vietnam Veteran).

MEMORIAL DAY

While visiting some cemeteries you may notice headstones marking certain graves have coins on them, left by previous visitors to the grave. These coins have distinct meanings when left on the headstones of those who gave their life while serving in America's military, and these meanings vary depending on the denomination of coin.

A coin left on a headstone or at the grave site is meant as a message to the deceased soldier's family that someone else has visited the grave to pay respect. Leaving a penny at the grave means simply you visited. A nickel indicates you and the deceased trained at boot camp together, while a dime means you served with the soldier in some capacity. By leaving a quarter at the grave, you are telling the family you were with the soldier when he/she was killed.

No matter what the original intention of the coin-leaver may be, it seems clear that a coin left on a headstone is a symbol of remembrance and respect. A way of telling all who pass by that the person buried there was loved and visited often.



BIG SHOUT OUT TO THE FEMALE HUGHES COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND RUNNINGS

Kudos and a Big “HATS OFF” salute to Sheila Carpenter, Veterans Service Claims Assistant for Hughes, Stanley and Sully Counties, and her co-workers!

When the message went out that women’s clothing was needed at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, Carpenter visited with her female co-workers at the court house. They decided to do a clothing drive for the female veterans at MJFSVH and they set Mother’s Day as their deadline for the drive.

Collectively, this group of employees and their friends at Runnings in Pierre, collected over five large boxes of clothing for the female veterans.

This is not a first for this group of employees. They have been huge supporters of our veterans and our military personnel currently serving. They have supported our military families when soldiers from this community were deployed. They faithfully wear RED on Fridays, they PURPLE UP in April, and they have been huge contributors to the Veterans Holiday gift program for MJFSVH.

KUDOS and THANK YOU to this outstanding group of employees at Hughes County!



WWII DOCUMENTARY FEATURES MARCELLA LEBEAU OF EAGLE BUTTE

This weekend, SDPB will air the 54-minute documentary, "Angels in Our Midst". The official selection of the 2018 Black Hills Film Festival, it focuses on World War II American nurses who participated in the D-Day Invasion and the European Theater. It details what it took for women to enlist in the army at that time, what they lived through and how they were each impacted by the experience.

Marcella Ryan LeBeau, a member of the Two Kettle Band, Cheyenne River Sioux

Tribe, from Eagle Butte, South Dakota is one of the nurses featured in the film. Marcella was a recipient of the French Legion of Honor for her service in World War II.

A trailer for the film may be viewed [here](#).

SDPB will air "Angels in our Midst" on Sunday, May 26, at 10pmCT/9MT on SDPB1.



Honor and remember those who died serving our nation this Memorial Day.

**SAT.
MAY 25
11 - 2**

Join us at the Custer Beacon for a Family Friendly Cookout

All proceeds to benefit the Custer Veterans Memorial Park

Sponsored by:
Custer Legion Post 46
VFW Post 3442
1881 Courthouse Museum



WHITE HOUSE VA HOTLINE SURPASSES 250,000 CALLS FROM VETERANS

Pledged by President Donald J. Trump as part of his administration's commitment to reforming the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as of May 14, the [White House VA Hotline](#) has answered more than 250,195 calls since it went live June 1, 2017.

The hotline, 855-948-2311, serves veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors by giving them a direct, nonemergency, contact line available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with agents — the majority of whom are veterans or from a veteran family — who are trained to address general and common VA inquiries.

"The White House VA Hotline is quickly becoming the VA's front door for questions or concerns about the VA and community resources," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This milestone is a testament to the VA's commitment to improving the veteran experience."

While veterans are encouraged to use existing VA contact centers, the hotline offers an alternative "always the right number" approach, transferring calls when needed to VA subject matter experts, such as the [Veterans Crisis Line](#). The hotline serves as the VA's front door to listen to veterans' experiences, identify trends in veteran feedback and resolve veterans health, benefits and services concerns anywhere in the department.

More than half the calls to the hotline are general inquiries about the VA's care, benefits and memorial services. Concerns that cannot be resolved immediately are entered as cases, accessible to VA Offices of Client Relations. To date, 94% of the total 157,346 cases created have been resolved.

According to recent data from April, the average wait time to speak to a live agent was nine seconds, with calls typically lasting about 15 minutes. About 1% of all calls were compliments.

For more information about the hotline, visit <https://www.va.gov/ve/whvahotline.asp>. Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors can call the White House VA Hotline at 855-948-2311.



BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY TO HOST MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

The Black Hill National Cemetery will host two Memorial Day Programs to honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. Both programs will be held on Monday, May 27, at the Black Hills National Cemetery Committal Shelter/flag pole area.

The first program will start at 11:00 am (MT) and will feature American Legion State Commander Denny Brendan. This program is sponsored by the American Legion.

The second program will be held at 1:00 pm (MT) and is sponsored by the Oglala Sioux Tribe.



All Gave Some, Some
Gave All

MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE
SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME



*"Our debt to the heroic men
and vallant women in
service of our country can
never be paid. They have
earned our undying
gratitude,"*

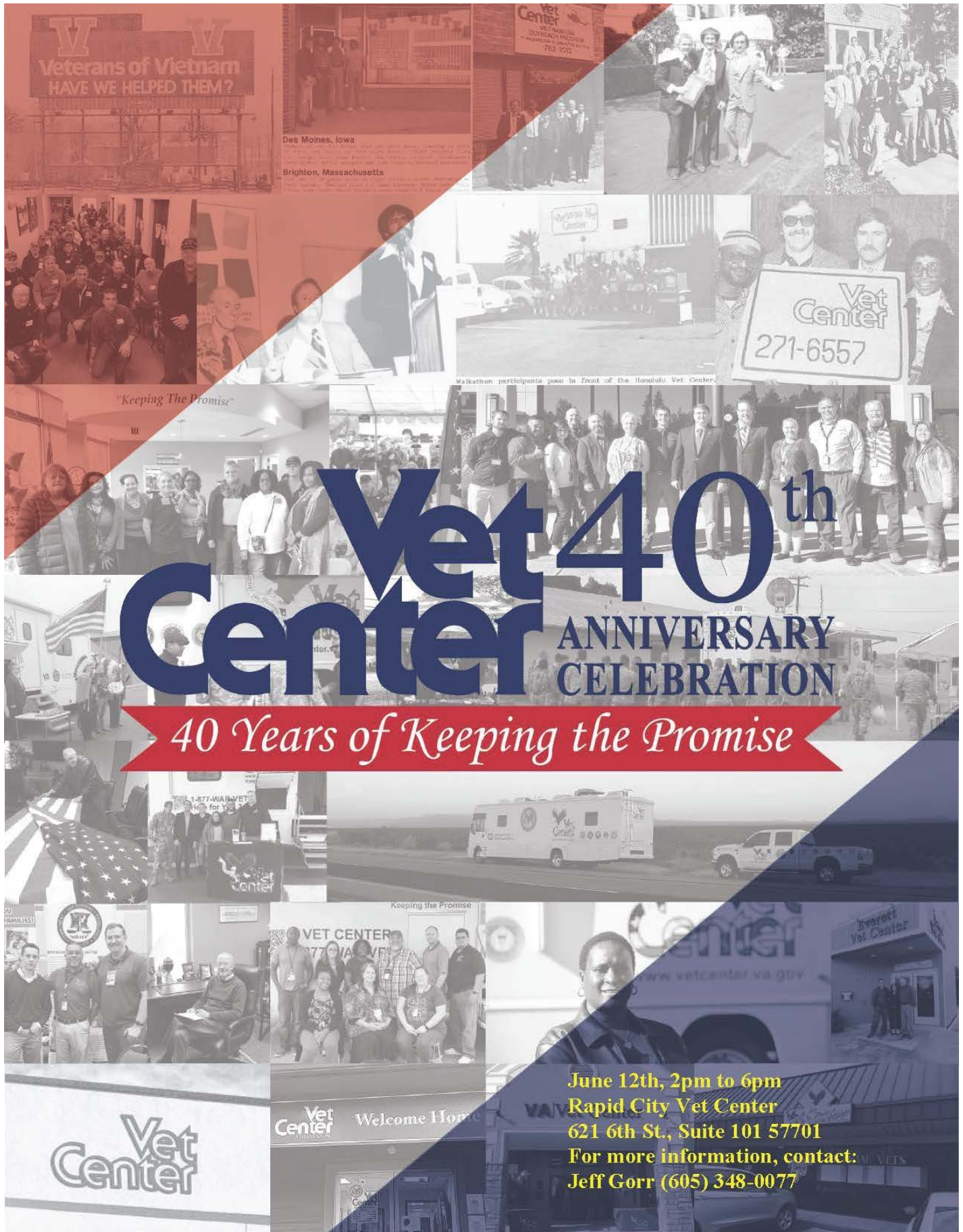
-President Truman

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

MONDAY MAY 27, 2019

9:00 AM

SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME



Vet 40th Center ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

40 Years of Keeping the Promise

June 12th, 2pm to 6pm
Rapid City Vet Center
621 6th St., Suite 101 57701
For more information, contact:
Jeff Gorr (605) 348-0077

Additional text visible in the collage includes: "Veterans of Vietnam HAVE WE HELPED THEM?", "Des Moines, Iowa", "Brighton, Massachusetts", "Walkington participants pose in front of the Honolulu Vet Center", "Keeping The Promise", "1-877-WAR-VET", "Vet Center", "Welcome Home", and "Rapid City Vet Center".

May 25—Memorial Day Community Cookout—Custer Beacon—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
 May 26—SDPB Documentary—Angels in our Midst—10:00 pm (CT)
 May 27—MJFSVH Memorial Day Program—9:00 am (MT)
 May 27—State Offices Closed
 May 27—BHNC Memorial Day Programs 11:00 am (MT) and 1:00 pm (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Program—Fairburn Cemetery—8:00 am (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Program—Hermosa Cemetery—9:00 am (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Program—Cold Springs —9:00 am (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Program— Pringle Cemetery—10:00 am (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Program— Custer City Cemetery—11:00 am (MT)
 May 27—Memorial Day Community Potluck— Custer VFW —Noon (MT)
 Jun 6—SFVAHCS 2nd Annual VA Baby Shower—DAV (1519 W. 51st Street) - Sioux Falls—6:00 pm (CT)
 Jun 6-9—American Legion State Convention—Sioux Falls Convention Center
 Jun 8—Department of SD Marine Corps League State Convention—American Legion Post 8—Pierre—10:00 am (CT)
 Jun 12—Sioux Falls Vet Center 40th Anniversary Open House—3:00 pm—5:00 pm (CT) - 3200 W. 49th Street
 Jun 12—Rapid City Vet Center 40th Anniversary Open House—2:00 pm—6:00 pm (MT) 621 6th Street—Suite 101
 Jun 13-16—VFW State Convention—Dakota State University—Madison
 Jun 8—Military/Veterans Canaries Appreciation Night—Sioux Falls—6:00 pm (CT)
 Jun 14—Flag Day
 Jun 15—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
 Jun 15—Tribute to Freedom—Honoring our Veterans—Eureka Sports Complex—10:30 am (CT)
 Jun 20—VABHCS Veterans Orientation Program (Building 53—Room 102) Hot Springs—4:30 pm (MT)
 Jun 29—Veterans for Veterans Annual Poker Run—Mitchell Depot Bar and Grill—11:00 am (CT)
 Jul 4—State Offices Closed
 Jul 17—South Dakota Veterans Council—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
 Jul 20—PVA 5th Annual Poker Run—Thirsty Duck Bar and Grill (945 S. Marion Road) - Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
 July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL
 Jul 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
 Aug 2—American Legion Highway 281 Centennial Run (ND/SD Border to SD/NE Border)
 Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
 Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
 Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show
 Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair
 Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School
 Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
 Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
 Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course



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